

# Opposing Views

## Attachment #21

### Timber Harvest Degrades Forest Health and Restores nothing in a Forested Ecosystem

**Logging not Restoration Opposing View #1** - "We question the validity of thinning as a means both to reduce the threat of wildfire and to restore historic forest structure in the absence of site-specific data collection on past and present landscape conditions."

Platt, Rutherford V. Ph.D., Thomas T. Veblen Ph.D., and Rosemary L. Sherriff "**Are Wildfire Mitigation and Restoration of Historic Forest Structure Compatible? A Spatial Modeling Assessment**" Published Online: by the Association of American Geographers. Sep. 8, 2006

<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/anna/2006/00000096/00000003/art00001>

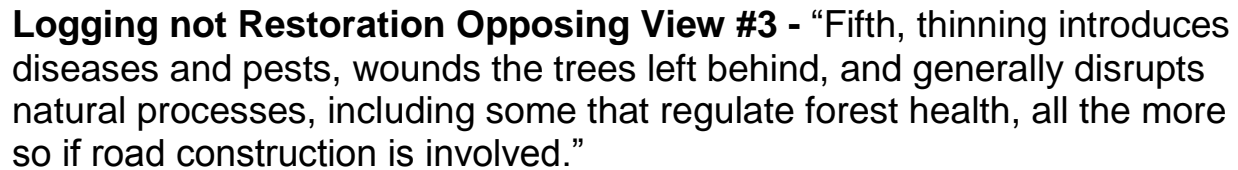


**Logging not Restoration Opposing View #2** - "Even 'kinder, gentler' commercial logging still inflicts environmental impacts such as eroded topsoil, degraded water quality, destroyed wildlife habitat, and extirpated species that are every bit as much symptoms of forest health problems as large-scale, severe wildfires."

Ingalsbee, Timothy Ph.D. "**Logging for Firefighting: A Critical Analysis of the Quincy Library Group Fire Protection Plan.**"

Unpublished research paper. 1997.

[http://www.fire-ecology.org/research/logging-for-firefighting\\_2.htm](http://www.fire-ecology.org/research/logging-for-firefighting_2.htm)



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**Logging not Restoration Opposing View #4** - “Traditionally, the term ‘forest health’ has been used in a limited, utilitarian sense by professional foresters to refer to the growth and vigor of trees (see Kolb et al. 1994). For example, according to one Forest Service publication, a forest is healthy when “biotic and abiotic influences on forests do not threaten management objectives now or in the future” (USFS 1993). From this perspective, a forest is healthy if trees are free from insects and pathogens and growing at maximum rates; it is unhealthy if trees are dead or dying. Anything that decreases or threatens to decrease yield (insects, disease, decaying trees, fire) is something to be controlled or eliminated. Managers therefore argue for removal and commercial utilization of trees that are perceived to be in danger from such threats.”

“However, many conservationists and forest scientists have expressed concern about such thinking. This narrow definition of forest health does not consider the health of the entire ecosystem, such as water and soil quality and the diversity and interactions of other life forms. It does not provide guidance for management of resources other than timber. It has encouraged foresters to simplistically view insects and other non-timber

elements of forest ecosystems as good or bad, based only on how they affect the growth rates of commercial tree species.”

“When viewing forests from an ecosystem health perspective, scientists do not recognize the ‘forest health crisis’ described by the proponents of salvage logging who are concerned about losing economically valuable timber to fire or insects. To the scientists, insects, disease and fire are normal parts of healthy ecosystems, essential for forest regeneration, cycling of nutrients and maintaining a variety of dead and living trees for wildlife habitat. Attempts to control or eliminate these agents may lead to unforeseen and undesirable consequences. For example, widespread removal of dead and dying trees eliminates habitat required by bird species that feed on insects that attack living trees, with the result that outbreaks of pests may increase in size or frequency (Torgersen et al. 1990).”

Peters, Robert L. Ph.D, Evan Frost, and Felice Pace. 1996 **“Managing for Forest Ecosystem Health: A Reassessment of the ‘Forest Health Crisis’** <http://www.magicalliance.org/Forests/Forest%20Health%20Evaluated.htm>



**Logging not Restoration Opposing View #5** - “It is well established that logging and roadbuilding often increase both fuel loading and fire risk. For example, the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) Science Team (1996) concluded that “timber harvest.... has increased fire severity more than any other recent human activity” in the Sierra Nevada. Timber harvest may increase fire hazard by drying of microclimate associated with canopy opening and with roads, by increases in fuel loading by generation of activity fuels, by increases in ignition sources associated with machinery and roads, by changes in species composition due to opening of stands, by the spread of highly flammable non native weeds, insects and disease, and by decreases in forest health associated with damage to soil and residual trees (DellaSala and Frost, 2001; Graham et al., 2001; Weatherspoon et al., 1992; SNEP Science Team, 1996). Indeed a recent literature review reported that some studies have found a positive correlation between the occurrence of past logging and present fire hazard in some forest types in the Interior Columbia Basin (DellaSala and Frost, 2001).”

<http://www.plantsocieties.org/PDFs/Fire%20letter%20CNPS%208.02%20letterhead.pdf>

**Logging not Restoration Opposing View #6** - "Forest life spans and cycles continue for centuries, while human lives are measured in decades. It seems a bit precocious for managers and scientists to look at the forest through their narrow window in time and announce that the forest is critically unhealthy because it appears to be temporarily out of balance. Fire, insects, and pathogens at various times and intensities are not a "crisis," but rather vital parts of the normal forest life cycle of Western forests. In the absence of fire (nature's "reset button"), insects and pathogens often work together like "slow fire" to restart forest succession or reduce the density of overstocked stands. The scale of their interaction within the forest ecosystem is affected (but not necessarily controlled) by climate changes, existing forest conditions, local weather patterns, and ongoing human manipulation.

Natural fires, if allowed to burn in the uninhabited realms of our national forests, will not cost taxpayers the hundreds of millions of dollars a year that public logging currently does. In national parks and wilderness areas, fires often burn themselves out without intervention unless they threaten other ownerships or human lives. Fire, like logging, may provide temporary employment, but, unlike logging, does not build roads, remove all the trees from a site, compact soils, or permanently reduce biological diversity. Fire did not eradicate the valuable Western White Pine, logged to remnants and then fatally infected with blister rust from imported and replanted seedlings. Fire has not, over time, methodically decimated forest watersheds. If there is a forest health crisis, a good part of it is due to excessive logging. The most "successful" national forest management might be to retire the Forest Service from an incredibly inefficient career of logging and re-establish our heritage lands to their original status as reserves.

Keene, Roy **"Forests, Fires and Logging"**

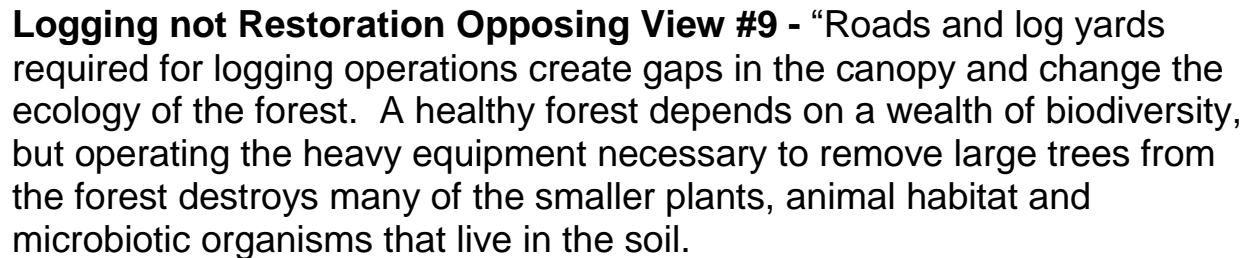
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**Power, Thomas Ph.D. “The Politics of Forest Fires -- The Abuse of Other People's Hard Times.”**

Thomas Michael Power is the Professor and Chairman of the Economics Department,  
University of Montana

<http://www.forwolves.org/ralph/tompower.htm>



The DNR claims that logging promotes forest health, but even a brief visit to a logging site quickly dispels the truth of this claim. The DNR typically marks the large, commercially valuable trees for sale, not the sick or overcrowded smaller trees. Any gardener knows that you do not weed out the largest, healthiest plants for good cultivation.”

**Logging not Restoration Opposing View #10** - “Recently, so called “salvage” logging has increased on national forests in response to a timber industry invented “forest health crisis” which points the finger at normal forest processes of fire, fungi, bacteria, insects and other diseases. In fact the crisis in the national forests is habitat destruction caused by too much clearcutting.”

A statement by Arthur Partridge, Ph.D.  
At a Press Conference with Senator Robert Torricelli, April 28, 1998, U.S. Capitol  
<http://www.saveamericasforests.org/news/ScientistsStatement.htm>